DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 313 766 CS 507 003

AUTHOR Williams, David E.
TITLE Modified Group Debate in Introductory Classes.
PUB DATE 5 Nov 88
NOTE 9p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Speech Communication Association (74th, New Orleans, LA, November 3-6, 1988).
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Communication Skills; *Debate; *Debate Format; Higher Education; Instructional Materials; Persuasive Discourse; Public Speaking; *Speech Instruction; *Teacher Developed Materials

ABSTRACT

This classroom exercise presents a scaled-down version of traditional debate for students enrolled in introductory public speaking or small group communication courses at the university level. The exercise project involves two weeks, the first week for preparation and the second week for conducting in-class debates, and is presented in a competitive format to increase student interest in participation. Description of daily classroom procedures is included in the exercise, and a handout outlining team organization, speaker duties, debate schedules, team and individual grading is attached. The exercise helps students develop communication skills in the six areas of argument construction, argument anticipation, listening, impromptu speaking, research and group work. (KEH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED313766

MODIFIED GROUP DEBATE IN INTRODUCTORY CLASSES

BY

David E. Williams
School of Interpersonal Communication
Ohio University
Athens, Ohio 45701

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

David E. Williams

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CS507003

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the Speech Communication Association, New Orleans, November 5, 1988. GREAT IDEAS FOR TEACHING SPEECH IV (GIFTS) program.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

MODIFIED DEBATE

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This exercise presents a scaled-down version of traditional debate for students in public speaking or small group communication courses. The project will involve, at least, two weeks to prepare and conduct and can be presented in a competive format to increase student interest in the exercise.

PROCEEDURE

Time Allotment

The instructor should devote at least two weeks to the project for discussion of speaker duties, planning of the affirmative and negative cases and conducting the debates. If the class meets three days a week, the first two days should be spent on discussion of the speaker duties. The third day would be devoted to in-class group work. This will allow the groups to ask questions as they prepare their respective cases. The second week would be devoted entirely to in-class debates.

Day 1 Discussion

The first day will cover a lot of material. First, the instructor should have divided the class into four teams. The teams can be designated A, B, C and D as shown on the sample handout. The instructor may wish to balance the teams by speaking, writing and argumentation skills as discovered in previous speeches and exercises.

Second, the instructor will need to discuss the speaker

duties. These are simplified versions of traditional debate speaker duties. It should be stressed that only the first affirmative and first negative constructive speeches are prepared in advance. The first affirmative will present the general views of his/her team and then read the affirmative plan. The first negative speaker will present the general views of his/her team and discuss the harms of the resolution.

The second affirmative speakers need to be told to anticipate what the other team is likely to argue and have responses prepared in advance. The second affirmative should attack the negative views and readdress the benefits of the affirmative stance. The second negative should quickly prepare responses to the affirmative plan while the first negative and second affirmative speeches are being delivered.

There is only one rebuttal for each team. Both speakers should be instructed to summarize the arguments of the debate and explain why their team won.

Third, the instructor will need to announce the debate topic. Students can be consulted in order to choose a topic of interest to a majority of the class. Policy topics will usually work better for these debates because they clarify the direction of the arguments; either a proposition should be adopted or rejected. Previous topics from these debates included: "Wearing seatbelts should be mandatory in our state"; "The 65 mile an hour speed limit

should be adopted nationwide" and "Marajuana should be legalized". Given the limited time to prepare, the topics should address a current issue to allow for easier research. The topics should also allow for relatively equal access to affirmative and negative evidence.

Fourth, the instructor should discuss research possibilities for the debate. The library is a natural source. However, students should be encouraged to consult university authorities, local interest groups or conduct public opinion polls, if applicable with the topic.

Fifth, the instructor may wish to explain how the project will be graded. Different grading methods will be discussed later.

Day 2 Discussion

The second class meeting should address the construction of first affirmative and first negative speeches. The affirmative teams should divide the first affirmative into two parts. The first part should present a few general benefits of accepting the resolution. This should constitute about 60 to 90 seconds. The second part should provide a step-by-step plan of how the affirmative team could enact the changes for which they will argue. To simplify the writing of the affirmative plan the instructor can alert students to the five issues of workability, funding, governing body, plan-meet-need and whether the plan creates any new and greater problems. The instructor should point out that second negative speakers can also use these

criteria to evaluate the affirmative plan. The first negative speakers can also divide their speeches into two parts. The first part should present the negative teams' views on the topic. For example, the first negative might explain that mandatory seatbelts would be an invasion of privacy and that wearing seatbelts is uncomfortable. The second part of the first negative would present more specific, and substantiated, harms of the resolution. This might include increased car costs and the high rate of ineffective seatbelts.

Day 3 Discussion

The third day should be set aside for in-class preperation of the upcoming debates. This day will allow the groups to check with the instructor on final preperations of the affirmative plans and individual speaker roles. The instructor can also check to see that affirmative plans are prepared, or in a position to be ready, for the first debate. The instructor can also make sure groups have decided whom will assume each speaker role.

Week 2

The second week, as shown on the handout, is set aside for debates. The time limit for first constructive speeches is four minutes each. All other speeches are three minutes and there is no preperation time between speakers. With these time limits each debate should last approximately 20 minutes. This would allow for two debates in a 50 or 60 minute class session. After each debate a

winner can be determined. This can be done by decision of the instructor, class vote of idle teams or an independent judge such as a member of the university debate team. Voting for a winning team will add excitement to the exercise by appealing to the student's sense of competitiveness.

The debate schedule can be arranged, as shown on the handout, so each team will debate on either the affirmative or negative side each day. By the end of the week two teams will have debated on the affirmative side twice and negative once while the other teams will have debated negative twice and affirmative once.

GRADING

Grading for this project can be done in a few different ways. Speakers can be graded individually on their performances in the debates. However, since it is a group project, evaluation should be based on a group grade. By the end of the second week, each group will have a win-loss record of 3-0, 2-1, 1-2 or 0-3. The instructor can make the base group grade for a 3-0 team an A; 2-1 a B and 1-2 or 0-3 a C. From the base grade, the instructor can reserve the right to alter individual grades according to superior or inferior group work, speaking or debating skill.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

This exercise will help students develop communication skills in the six areas of: argument construction, argument anticipation, listening, impromptu speaking, research and

group work.

Those students involved in the preperation of the affirmative case, ideally the whole group, will learn how to construct solid arguments and develop sufficient links between their proposals. Those who work on the first negative will be forced to anticipate how others will argue a point. All speakers will work on their listening skills as they attempt to follow the arguments of the debate. If students are asked to vote on the debates, even the two uninvolved teams will practice their listening skills.

The debate will tend to move quickly and the second constructive rebuttal speakers will learn to think quickly and prepare impromptu speeches. Typically, there will be a great deal of improvement between the first and second rounds as the students become more accustomed to the impromptu speaking situations. All students will be involved in research for their team. This will help reinforce the research skills developed when preparing public speeches. Finally, this exercise demands that the students be able to work together and do their share of the preparation. Those who do not contribute during the week of preparation will generally debate poorly because they are less informed about the topic and their team's position on it.

DEBATE

A	B	C	D
student	student	student	student
student	student	student	student
student	student	student	student
student	student	student	student
student	student	student	student

(class divided into four teams)

Speaker Order

1st affirmative constructive	4 min.
1st negative constructive	4 min.
2nd affirmative constructive	3 min.
2nd negative constructive	3 min.
1st negative rebuttal	3 min.
1st affirmative rubuttal	3 min.

Speaker Duties

1 A.C.
present aff. views
explain why resolution should be adopted
present aff. plan

1 N.C.
present neg. views
explain harm of resolution

2 A.C.
attack neg. views
rebuild aff views

2 N.C.
attack aff. plan
show how it won't work
build neg. views

1 N.R.
summarize debate and show why neg. won

1 A.R.
summarize debate and show why aff. won.

Debate Schedule

day 1
(aff) A vs. B (neg)
(aff) C vs. D (neg)

day 2
(aff) A vs. C (neg)
(aff) B vs. D (neg)

day 3
(neg) A vs. D (aff)
(neg) B vs. C (aff)

Grading Base

Team Record	Base Grade
3-0	A
2-1	B
1-2	C
0-3	C

The instructor reserves the right to alter the base grade according to an individual's superior or inferior performance.